
REPORT 7
(1215/52/IM)

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION PLAN: DRAFT LONG TERM PLAN 2012 – 2022

1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval for the proposed communication and consultation to be undertaken on the draft Long Term Plan 2012–2022.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree the key messages for the draft Long Term Plan 2012/22 listed in section 4 of the report.*
3. *Agree the communication, consultation and engagement tools that will be used to support the consultation on the Long Term Plan*
4. (a) *Agree that the hearing of oral submissions on the long-term plan be done by the Strategy and Policy Committee.*

(b) *Agree to offer submitters a discussion-based process as an alternative to attending a SPC meeting to make an oral submission.*
5. *Agree that the formal consultation period starts on 16 April 2012 and closes on 18 May 2012 with hearings scheduled from 21-24 May 2012.*

3. Background

The purpose of the draft Long Term Plan 2012-22 (draft LTP) is to demonstrate how the Council intends to achieve *Towards 2040: Wellington Smart Capital* – the recently released strategic direction.

This ten year plan is being prepared in a very constrained environment, with a global recession that shows no sign of abating and a poor domestic and local economic outlook in the short to medium term. There are affordability pressures on households who are struggling to make ends meet and who have no desire to see rates increase. Equally the Council is also facing affordability issues.

These challenges include the ongoing cost of the leaky homes solution agreed with Government, the quantification of costs to make our city's infrastructure resilient in the event of an earthquake or other disaster and a large asset base, much of which is aging and requiring replacement. Residents, ratepayers and visitors are also reluctant to see services diminish.

A programme of early engagement was established to enable these challenges to be put in front of Wellingtonians and some initial feedback gathered.

The programme was targeted and activities included:

- Online methods including discussion boards based around the *Towards 2040: Wellington Smart Capital* themes
- Workshops with Council's existing advisory groups
- Meetings with Residents' Associations
- Information booths at summer events

A draft of the Long Term Plan must be consulted on using the special consultative procedure before it can be adopted. It is proposed that the draft Long Term Plan will be consulted on from 16 April until 18 May 2012.

An important role of the draft LTP is to provide information about significant issues facing a community so that the community can provide feedback on the choices the Council is facing.

The inclusion of a Financial Strategy in the Long Term Plan is a new requirement. The strategy identifies future rates targets, rates limits and debt limits. The financial strategy will impose significant constraints on Council spending and the implications of this will need to be explained to the community and consulted on.

4. Process and high level timeline

Special Consultative Procedure

The special consultative procedure will take place as outlined below with additional enhancements that will make sure Wellingtonians and interested and affected parties have an opportunity to contribute to the plan.

Timeline	Stage	Activity
Late March	Council adopts a statement of proposal (SOP). This is the draft Long Term Plan and sets out what the Council proposes to do over the next decade, and how much this will cost. A summary of the draft LTP must also be prepared which is a fair representation of the major points of the full document.	

Timeline	Stage	Activity
Prior to 16 April	Council gives the public notice allowing at least a month for people to make submissions	Public notice
16 April – 18 May	Draft Long Term Plan is made available to public with consultation taking place from 16 April to 18 May	Advisory groups Residents' associations Major stakeholders Maori The public and interested groups
21 – 24 May	Oral hearings A discussion based forum (<i>as an alternate to a formal hearing</i>)	Hearings 21-24 May Timing for the forum is yet to be scheduled

Context for decision-making

The Council is preparing this Long Term Plan within the context of significant financial constraints including the considerable costs associated with earthquake strengthening the city's assets.

In developing priorities for investment and service reduction priorities were established against the following criteria:

- We will focus on those things that make Wellington an inclusive place where talent wants to live:
 - The primary focus will be on the CBD,
 - Investment will be considered along the growth spine where it maintains quality and can be done with co-investment
- We will improve the resilience of the city through:
 - Investment in infrastructure
 - Supporting neighbourhoods
- We will reduce our costs by:
 - Reducing regulation – removing red tape
 - Investing in technology
 - Managing demand
 - Partnering with others to deliver services
 - Developing other income opportunities

The Council has limited options to deal with increased costs. The Council can:

- (a) increase rates
- (b) increase fees and charges
- (c) borrow more
- (d) re-align services/resources from non-priority areas to priority areas.

To maintain Wellington as a vibrant city, the Council needs a clear indication from the community as to which Council services are a priority, how they should be paid for (through rates or user charges) and whether there are services or activities that Council provides at the moment that could be reduced or removed to help keep rates rises down.

The aim of the consultation process is to give residents and ratepayers an opportunity to give feedback on the Council's plans over the next 10 years.

The key is to make sure that the community understands the context in which these changes are being considered. Only through the community understanding the affordability issue, will they be involved in developing the solution and have a degree of acceptance of changes in services.

Key messages

- We're operating in a global recession. For New Zealand we have an additional disadvantage as we are a small country that is far away from global markets.
- The next decade will be critical for Wellington. We're facing some big challenges – the public sector is our biggest employer and is contracting and our economy is not as well diversified as it could be. We know we must also focus on building a more resilient city – both to make our city safer for residents and to continue to be able to attract businesses and residents here. This is important work but the cost of doing this is high.
- Over the next decade our top priority must be building a more resilient city. This will have long term benefits to Wellingtonians. People will be safer and equally as important – residents and businesses will be more confident about living and doing business here. It does mean that there is limited money available for new assets.
- We want to be able to continue to attract people and businesses to Wellington so we are also planning to make investing in the central city and attracting talent and events to the city something that we focus on operational spending on.
- A core function of Councils is to own and maintain infrastructure assets such as the road, water and wastewater systems. We also own significant community assets like libraries, swimming pools, community centres, playgrounds, parks and artificial turfs. The cost of owning assets is high and rising – through insurance costs, borrowing costs and the need to invest in creating more resilient assets. This is making us asset rich and cash poor and limits our ability to fund new projects.
- Households are feeling the impact of an economic recession and, in Wellington, the retrenchment of the public service is also having an impact. Affordability is a key issue for households. We have received feedback telling us that people don't want to see reductions in our services but would

prefer that to rates rises. This means the Council is facing some difficult decisions as we try to balance these issues.

- As a Council in order to respond to these challenges, we need to exercise financial discipline. We have adopted a financial strategy which aims to keep future rates increases at the same level as household inflation.
- It is clear that the challenges of the next decade will require us to re-think the way we do business. We don't have all the answers now but we are putting in place a working party of Councillors to review our asset holdings, our service levels and develop some options for the future.

5. The consultation elements for the draft Long Term Plan

There are two priorities in terms of the consultation on the draft plan:

- To raise awareness of the Council's plans as widely as possible
- To generate feedback through the submission process while also encouraging public and on-line discussion of the key issues

Communication Activities	
Draft LTP document and summary	The draft LTP document and summary will be made available through Council's libraries, swimming pools, service centre, Citizen Advice Bureaus and by request through the Contact Centre.
Database	The summary (and submission form) will be made available through our database.
Media releases	Media releases will be developed throughout the submission period to highlight key issues.
Print media	Public notices are required as part of the special consultative procedure. There will also be regular updates on Our Wellington Page and extensive coverage of key issues. Advertising will also be used in the Wellingtonian and City Life.
Council website	The draft LTP document and submission process will be available on-line.
Social Media	There will be a Facebook page that will push people to the on-line discussion boards.
Informal communications	There will be briefing material available for councillors to use as they work within their wards and portfolios. This will include submission forms and other methods for getting feedback.
Newsletters and regular communication methods	Existing newsletters and mailing lists will be used to alert our regular stakeholders to key issues.

Communication Activities	
Community Visibility	<p>Poster, brochures available in shopping malls, libraries, community centres etc. We will develop opportunities alongside displays for councillors to meet stakeholders in their ward to discuss the draft plan.</p> <p>There will be an inclusion in the rates notice sent out through the submission period.</p>

Engagement Activities	
Presentations and workshops	<p>Presentations to Community Boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tawa - Makara Ohariu <p>Meetings with major stakeholders (for example)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Property Council - Wellington Employers Chamber of Commerce - Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust - Ngati Toa Rangatira - Victoria University - Massey University <p>Workshops with existing advisory groups and fora</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental Reference Group - Pacific Advisory Group - Accessibility Advisory Group - Youth Council <p>Residents Associations There was limited uptake in 2011 with an invitation to come and talk about the community priorities and preferences to feed into the development of a draft LTP. This offer will be remade now that proposals have been developed.</p> <p>Requested meetings As in previous years there is an option to attend the regular meetings of groups who request an LTP presentation.</p>
e-engagement	Discussion boards on options will be available as well as a Facebook page.

Engagement Activities	
Mayor and Councillor hotline	The phone-in hotline will be available one evening a week throughout the submission period.
Maori engagement	In addition to consultation with iwi there will be work with the wider Maori community including Te Awe Maori Business network, kaumatua network, kohanga and kura and the Maori Reference Group initiated previously
Survey	There will be further survey work on key issues (investment options and service level change proposals)

5.1 Gathering feedback

Written submissions

It is important that submitters are provided the opportunity to present their views in a manner and format that is appropriate to their needs. Submitters will be able to submit written submissions by letter, fax, online and email. Free post submission forms will also be included in all draft long-term plan documents. These will be widely distributed and available at service centres and all Council libraries.

Oral submissions

People will also be able to provide their feedback in person. Oral hearings provide the submitter the opportunity to express their views formally to elected members and reinforce, amend or add to their written submission.

Last LTCCP 138 people made oral submissions to a sub-committee. It is proposed that people wishing to make oral submissions to the LTP 2012-22 be offered a choice of attending a SPC meeting or an alternative as to how they do this.

This new approach was used by Auckland Council to hear submissions on its spatial plan last year. It offered people the option to make an oral submission in the traditional manner, or to participate in a “hearing workshop”. Submitters were grouped by submission topic, discussed the topic and reported back via a chosen spokesperson. Elected members circulated around the groups. A written summary of the feedback provided by participants was also circulated to Councillors to inform their decision making.

The satisfaction rating of participants in this process was in the order of 80%.

It is recommended that submitters be offered the choice of making an oral submission to the full Strategy and Policy Committee or to attend a workshop that would be a facilitated discussion and attended by elected members.

6. Conclusion

This consultation and communication plan provides a range of mechanisms to allow good reach into the communities of Wellington and a variety of ways that people can provide feedback.

A full copy of all submissions, a summary report of all the submissions will be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee before final decisions are made.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The consultation and communication plan contributes towards the following outcome:

“Wellington will operate an open and honest decision-making process that generates confidence and trust in the democratic system.”

2) LTP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

Development and consultation on the DAP sits within the following project: C530 Annual Planning and reporting.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

Targeted consultation will be undertaken with support by the Director Citizen Engagement.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

The report provides a sensible range of communication tools and an appropriate mix of opportunities for people to express their views on the Long Term Plan 2012-2022.

6) Legal Implications

The consultation and communication plan meets all statutory requirements of the LGA 2002.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report is consistent with Council’s Engagement Policy.